



**Meeting with the Wisconsin Motor Carrier Association  
Thursday, July 8, 2004, 10:00-11:30pm**

People in attendance

Wisconsin Motor Carrier Association members

Marc Bentley  
Todd Bonk  
Mike Hineman  
Tom Howells  
Pauline Jaske  
Buck Jenkins  
John Kreilkamp  
Bob Smith  
Tom Vandenberg

Wisconsin DOT

Sandy Beaupre  
Douglas Dalton  
Casey Newman  
Jonquil Johnston

1. Overview of WisDOT's meeting purpose and WisDOT's long-range plan, *Connections 2030*, by WisDOT staff: The meeting began at 10:10. Casey Newman, WisDOT, gave an overview of WisDOT's long-range plan *Connections 2030*. WisDOT is seeking input on transportation planning issues from larger Wisconsin cities at this point. *Connections 2030* is scheduled to be completed in 2006.
2. Gathering of input from the Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association: Discussion focused on the following issues:
  - a. Linking transportation taxation to transportation spending  
The Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association would like to see the funds collected through transportation user taxes, particularly the diesel fuel tax and truck registration and permit fees, used only for transportation expenditures, and more specifically for highway expenditures. Many members in attendance noted there has always been a good connection between the high fees they pay and good roads, and they have always supported this but that link has been broken. As a result, how highways are funded is their top transportation concern. It was noted that Wisconsin's diesel fuel tax and registration fees are among the top ten in the United States. The Motor Carriers Association would also prefer that money from the segregated fund not be transferred to the general fund for non-transportation uses. They feel they cannot continue to support truck registration fee increases and indexing of the gas tax if those revenues are not used for transportation.

The Motor Carriers Association remarked that there is a disconnect between users and payers of transportation facilities. One example they pointed to is how funds collected from transportation user fees have been transferred to local government budgets. The Motor Carriers Association would like to see a cap placed on the amount given to local governments equal to inflation.

The Motor Carriers Association stated their industry opposes tolls. They opined that the funding base for transportation is too narrow, focusing on the gas tax and truck registrations. They believe the funding base should be expanded with taxes collected from other users or uses, such as automobile sales. They would also like to see the burden of transportation infrastructure costs shared equally with other transportation users such as rail and transit.

b. Reform Initiatives

Members of the Motor Carriers Association noted their frustration with how PECFA (Petroleum Environmental Cleanup Fund Act) is managed in Wisconsin. They stated the program should be phased out, as other states have done, and that the DOT should get money for transportation investments.

They identified a need for the Connections 2030 plan to address the long range financing the transportation system so that it is not an issue when the state budget is more constrained. They would like to see a sales tax on automotive parts used for transportation investment.

They would also like to see reforms to the process for identifying that a facility needs to be improved (use of an accepted set of criteria).

They also feel that there needs to be a better understanding of transportation logistics – particularly what drives the freight-related decisions of shippers. Several members offered to connect WisDOT staff with their logistics operations in order to improve WisDOT's understanding and expertise.

c. Transportation Priorities

The Motor Carriers stated their priorities for transportation investments include:

- Safety.
- The Marquette Interchange in Milwaukee for economic development.

The Motor Carriers Association noted they are not interested in “Cadillac” highways. They would like to see continuation of the current balance of transportation related taxation to transportation related public expenditures. It was noted there should be incentives, especially in the local government arena, for finding cost efficiencies. They would like improvement projects to enhance safety and relieve congestion while finding cost efficiencies. They cited Hwy 26 from Waupun to Oshkosh as a good project that used less expensive measures such as improved geometrics and passing lanes. In addition, it was noted that the cost of providing mass transit is higher than the benefit it provides in congestion reduction on roadways. Therefore, while there may be merit in investing in those modes, there is no significant benefit to highway users.

As a whole the motor carriers are comfortable with the current balance of transportation investment in the state, although transfers of existing funds may erode that balance.

d. Trends in the Trucking Industry

Trucks and trailers are increasing in size (53' trailers are becoming standard). Load size is also increasing. This is an issue particularly when trying to reach plants or production facilities that are located off the designated long-truck highway system.

The intermodal market is growing. Doug Dalton asked if Union Pacific's new Global III Intermodal Facility located in Rochelle, Illinois would be a critical interchange hub for loading and unloading. The Motor Carriers felt the new facility will have an impact on freight movement patterns in Wisconsin, but were not sure of the exact routes. Also noted was the growing congestion in existing intermodal yards in the Chicago area.

Stricter air quality regulations for emissions are eroding the industry's ability to pay and have reduced fuel economy on new diesel engines due to additional components needed to meet emission reductions.

The trucking industry's costs are rising. They do not have the resources to pay higher registration/permitting fees and higher taxes, particularly the diesel tax.

The trucking industry's workforce is changing. The Motor Carriers Association reported a growing shortage of drivers, a demographic shift to a multi-lingual population, and federal limitations on hours of service. Due to the changing workforce, the Motor Carriers would support public transportation dollars spent on training and education for their workers.

Federal limitations on hours of service have created an increased need for truck parking facilities. The Motor Carriers Association thinks a state-private partnership would work best to provide a mixture of public and private parking facilities.

The industry is also responding to security needs in the post-September 11 climate, which is increasing the cost of finding new drivers.

e. Other Issues

The motor carriers would like WisDOT to take a leadership role in planning for future revenue options.

Truck parking is a national issue, but not so much in Wisconsin. Improvements in Wisconsin could be focused on making information on existing parking sites (be they public rest areas or private stops) more available.

The Motor Carriers Association would like to see a more efficient system for truck registration and other credentialing. Internet permitting is one option they mentioned. They noted that they lose productivity if a truck must sit while waiting for licensing or permits.

Potential idling regulations (starting to show up in other states) are another issue of concern.

They have a growing concern about cost overruns on current and future projects.